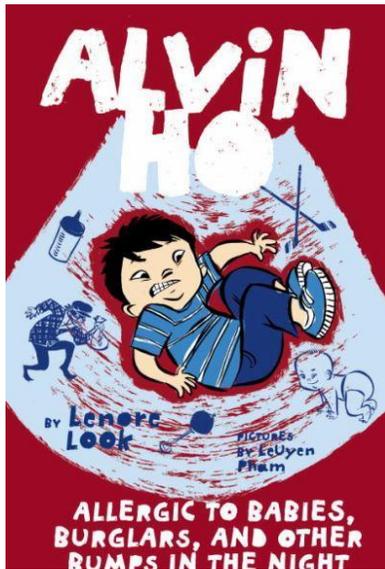


Alvin Ho Reading Guide



Questions and Ideas for Consideration

Series Fiction: The Alvin Ho books are considered series fiction for young or beginning readers. What are possible appeals of series texts?

Flea: Describe the ways that Flea is a unique character, including the subtle reference to her disability. What role does she play in Alvin's life?

Culture: In what ways does *Alvin Ho* reflect a uniquely Chinese American culture, and how does the book present this in productive or distinctive ways?

Humor: How is humor used in Lenore Look's work, and how does it shape her story and message? How does she mix humor with serious topics/ideas?

Fear: What are some of the things Alvin is afraid of and how does he deal with his fear? What kinds of messages does Alvin's story send about children and fears?

Relationships: Describe some of the relationships Alvin has in his life. What ideologies are presented through the people who care about him?

School: For Alvin, school is a scary place! What does the story say about school?

Details: Lenore Look uses amazing detail to bring her story to life. What are some of your favorite details, and what meaning do they add to the story?

Daybook Possibilities

- Choose another children's book that includes or describes pregnancy and compare/contrast.
- Visit Lenore Look's blog (which is awesome) at <http://lenorelook.wordpress.com/> and write about what you find. How does this affect your reading? Why might an author blog?
- Head to the library (or google) to take a look at other series texts for young readers. Which are your favorites? What do you notice about these kinds of books?
- Create a glossary like Alvin's for your week, including definitions of words in your life in Alvin's humorous style.
- Create your own PDK (personal disaster kit)! Make a list of what you'd want to include, including instructions for dealing with difficult or scary situations.
- Do a little research into Alvin's other books. What are the rules of being a gentleman? How did his friendship with Flea come to be?
- Try to find other children's books featuring Chinese American children and write about how Alvin Ho compares.

Resources and Critical Reading

"See How they Grow: Character Development in Children's Series Books" by GD Schmidt

"If the Read Nancy Drew, So What': Series Book Readers Talk Back" by Catherine Sheldrick Ross

"Toward a Poetics of Asian American Fantasy: Laurence Yep's Construction of a Bicultural Mythology" by Celestine Woo

"Facing the Village" by Lenore Look (in *Manoa* Volume 12, No 2, 2000)

Background and Context

Alvin Ho: Allergic to Babies Burglars, and Other Bumps in the Night is the fifth book in Lenore Look's Alvin Ho series. This award winning series follows Asian American second grader, Alvin, who is "so afraid of school that, while he's there, he never, ever, says a word. But at home he's a very loud superhero named Firecracker Man, a brother to Calvin and Anibelly, and a gentleman-in-training, so he can be just like his dad." Lenore Look has also written the Ruby Lu series and several picture books.